



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
BUREAU OF TENNCARE

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TENN. HOSPITALS, CLINICS TO GET \$4.4 MILLION IN U.S. GRANTS ERLANGER TO RECEIVE MORE THAN \$2.3 MILLION TO CREATE HEALTH CLINIC

NASHVILLE – Tennessee hospitals and clinics will receive \$4.4 million in federal grants to help improve access to primary medical care for TennCare members in an effort to avoid unnecessary emergency room visits. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded Tennessee the fourth highest grant amount out of \$50 million shared among 20 state Medicaid programs. The grants will be administered by the TennCare program.

Erlanger Health System with BlueCare and TennCare Select, two TennCare managed care organizations operated by Blue Cross Blue Shield, established a partnership for the grant and were awarded \$2,368,116 that will establish a newly developed health clinic on Erlanger's main campus. The new health clinic will serve as a primary care facility for TennCare members who seek non-emergent care in Erlanger's emergency department. The clinic will offer medical services when many primary care provider offices are closed.

"TennCare is excited to be able to relay these dollars directly to local communities," said Dr. Wendy Long, TennCare's chief medical officer. "It will allow clinics and hospital emergency rooms to provide appropriate medical access points to our members by treating patients in the setting that best meets their health needs."

The Blue Cross and Erlanger partnership will also use the grant funds to help TennCare members establish a medical home and promote the importance of the member's relationship with a primary care provider, lessening the use of the emergency room for non-emergent care. Blue Cross will station a staff person at Erlanger's emergency department to help educate TennCare members about locations other than the emergency department to access routine medical care services when appropriate.

"Every patient needs an ongoing relationship with a primary care provider, and these funds will support that concept," said Long. "An emergency room is simply not the right place to treat chronic health conditions or non-urgent health problems."

Two more regional grant projects also received funding. Nashville Medical Home Connection, a partnership between Nashville's United Neighborhood Health Services and nine area hospitals, will receive \$1,354,124; and \$750,000 will go to a partnership between Hardeman County Community Health Center and Haywood Park Community Hospital.

TennCare is Tennessee's managed-care Medicaid program, serving approximately 1.2 million low-income children, pregnant women and disabled Tennesseans, with an annual budget of \$7 billion.

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